

employed a caustic, which, after six applications, had destroyed it completely. On examining the woman, a healthy cicatrix alone remained, and no trace of disease was seen. The escharotic employed was the strong sulphuric acid of commerce, made into a paste with the exsiccated sulphate of zinc. Mr. Thompson believed that the employment of escharotics for the removal of cancerous growths could only be justified in exceptional cases, but that this was, from the circumstances named, one in which it was decidedly preferable to the knife.

Mr. HANCOCK had removed many cases of a similar kind with the knife, but he never saw so perfect a cure by any means as the present case exhibited. There was scarcely any scar.—*Lancet*, Oct. 31, 1857.

42. *Foreign Bodies introduced into the Bladder*.—M. DENUCÉ relates (*Moniteur des Hôpitaux*) the case of a woman who had introduced the handle of a stiletto into her bladder. After several days of severe suffering she came to the hospital, and as the urethra was found to be in a very dilated state, the extraction of the foreign body was easily accomplished, by means of a polypus forceps passed along the index finger.

M. Denucé has collected the particulars of 391 published cases, and the enumeration he gives of the bodies in question is both curious and useful. In 78 they were portions of catheters or lithotripsy instruments, viz., 15 metallic catheters, 9 gum-elastic catheters, 7 gutta percha catheters (a large proportion, considering the short time these dangerous instruments have been in use), 28 catheters (their nature not being specified), 16 bougies, and 3 branches of *brise-pierres*. Then we have 82 needles, pins, or tags, 1 stiletto, 1 crochet-needle, 6 bone or ivory needles, 6 ear picks, 3 ivory whistles, 1 ivory spindle, 1 ivory stiletto handle, 15 leaden balls, 3 small keys, and 8 instances of metallic fragments of various kinds. In 12 bones or splinters of bone, in 10 pebbles or china, 6 pen-holders, 15 needle-cases, 10 pieces of tobacco pipe, 4 portions of glass tubes. In 21 instances fragments of wood, as 3 pencils, 1 piece of a match, 1 ramrod, 1 mustard-spoon handle, &c. In 34 there were fragments of plants, as ears of corn, stalks, &c.; in 26, fruits or kernels; in 4, tents of charpie, 1 strip of linen, 1 skein of cotton, 3 *débris* of cotton or wool, 2 pieces of cord, 4 portions of wax candle, 3 pens, 1 piece of whalebone, 2 leather boot-laces, 1 piece of tendon, 2 *débris* of fecal matter, 1 pessary, 1 shell, 14 instances of various foetal *débris*, 6 locks of hair, 2 of larvæ of insects, and in 1 pills.

If we abstract from this curious list the bodies which have obtained accidental entrance into the bladder, whether from clumsy surgical manœuvres, or communications established through the walls of the bladder, either externally (as in the case of balls and wounds), or with the rectum, vagina, or ovary, there will still remain 258 cases in which no legitimate explanations can be given of the presence of these bodies. Those assigned by the patient are usually as singular as are the bodies themselves; some being said to find their way there while attempting self-catheterism, others from the patient having fallen on them, while others again are stated to have been swallowed. The true and principal cause of their introduction, when not accidental, is to be sought in the vagaries of an abandoned depravity. Of these 256 cases, 119 are stated as having been males, and 96 females; while in 41 instances the sex is not indicated. In 14 instances they occurred in children from the age of a few weeks to fifteen years.

After a foreign body introduced into the urethra has become propelled into the bladder, in a few days it begins to be covered with incrustations. At the end of some weeks these have attained a considerable thickness; while at the end of some months, true calculi may be constituted. The form of the body, however, exerts considerable influence upon the mode of deposit. In rounded or short bodies the incrustation becomes general, while in those which are elongated it takes place especially towards the middle. Thus, in most cases in which calculi have been formed on needles, the ends of these are found projecting beyond the deposit: and it is such calculi that especially give rise to cystitis and other dangerous accidents.

Among the 391 cases collected by M. Denucé, in 21 death took place inde-

pendently of any operation. In 13 of these the affection was recognized at the autopsy; but it is not stated with precision whether the vesical affection was the cause of death; in 2 death resulted from the *débris* of a fetus passing into the bladder; and in 6 it was the direct result of the introduction of the foreign body. These last were examples in which the points of pins or needles became imbedded in the walls of the bladder, giving rise to intense and fatal cystitis. Cases in which art does not intervene do not, however, always terminate thus, the efforts of nature in some sufficing to liberate the economy from their presence. Thus they may be carried out by the urine, especially when the bodies are small and women are the subjects. In 31 instances in which the age is specified, this occurred in 14 men and 17 women. Occasionally, certain bodies, such as broken needles, escape by penetration of tissue, and this is stated to have occurred in four cases.

As in the great majority of instances nature will not be able to secure the discharge of these bodies, the surgeon, in order to prevent the occurrence of dangerous accidents, must interfere, endeavouring first to secure their removal by extraction, and if unsuccessful, resorting to lithotomy. In the cases here collected, lithotomy has been had recourse to 125 times, viz., in males, perineal lithotomy, 87 times; recto-vesical, 2; hypogastric, 2; and in females, urethrovaginal lithotomy in 22, and hypogastric in 12. Unfortunately, in only 61 of these cases has the ultimate result been stated. In 39 occurring in males, perineal lithotomy was performed in 36 (31 recoveries and 5 deaths), hypogastric in 2 (both recoveries), and recto-vesical in 1 (fatal). In the 22 cases occurring in females, there were 15 urethral or vaginal operations (13 recoveries and 2 deaths) and 7 hypogastric (5 deaths and 2 recoveries). In the whole number, therefore, 48 recoveries and 13 deaths. The hypogastric operation has thus proved very fatal, 5 deaths taking place to 4 recoveries; and in the latter, in two instances the operation consisted simply in enlarging an aperture already existing.

The performance of the operation may be rendered difficult by the nature of the bodies to be removed. Thus, their softness may be such as to render their recognition and removal difficult; the length of others may lead to their being seized in the middle, and brought across the aperture; while, if they have remained long in the bladder, the size and irregularity of the incrustations present additional obstacles. The precision of measurement attainable by lithotripsy instruments, however, now comes to our aid. As to the particular operation indicated, it may be stated in a general way that the perineal operation in men, and the urethral in women, suffice for small bodies, or for such as are thin and elongated; those which are of larger size require the bilateral or vaginal operation; while the hypogastric, seeing its unfavourable results, should be reserved for quite exceptional cases. It must be remembered, however, that in women the urethral operation is almost always followed by incontinence of urine, and the vaginal by vesico-vaginal fistula.

Extraction of the foreign bodies has been performed in 112 of these cases, death following in 3. In reference to the influence which the introduction of lithotripsy has exerted upon the improvement of extracting instruments, M. Denucé makes the following calculation: Of the whole 239 cases in which interference has taken place, 127 occurred prior to, 122 subsequent to 1830, when lithotripsy may be considered to have generally established itself as an operation. In the early series, lithotomy was practised 100 times, and extraction 27 times only; while in the latter series, it was resorted to but 21 times, and extraction 101 times. Thus, formerly lithotomy, with its mortality of 15 per 100 was the rule; while now, extraction, with 3 deaths in 112 cases, is the rule, and lithotomy the exception. The progress that has been made is still more apparent when we consider the case of the male urethra, with its long, narrow, sinuous canal. Of 20 cases of extraction noted prior to 1830, 16 occurred in women, and but 4 in men; while of 73 since that epoch, in which the sex is indicated, 46 occurred in males, and 27 in females.—*B. and F. Med.-Chirurg. Rev.*, July, 1857.